

DIVINE RIGHT OF TITHES

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THE
DIVINE RIGHT OF TITHES

THE REV. CHAS. LESLIE'S LEARNED, LOGICAL AND CONCLUSIVE ESSAY
ON THIS SUBJECT (PRINTED IN 1700).

AN ABRIDGEMENT
BY THE
RECTOR OF ST. STEPHEN CHURCH,
MANAYUNK, PHILADELPHIA.

"I will surely give the tenth unto Thee."

*"He that giveth answer before he heareth, it is folly and
shame unto him."*

"Have faith in God."

PHILADELPHIA :
GLOBE PRINTING HOUSE,
112 NORTH TWELFTH ST.,
1887.

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THIS BRIEF
OF
A GREAT ARGUMENT
ON AN
APPOINTED AND SUFFICIENT
SUPPORT FOR DIVINE WORSHIP
IS DEDICATED TO THE
FREE AND OPEN CHURCH ASSOCIATION,
TO AID
IN ITS NOBLE DESIGN
OF REMOVING OFFENCES IN THAT WORSHIP,
WHICH, BY REASON OF THE NEGLECT OF TITHES, ARE
SHELTERED UNDER PLEAS
OF
NECESSITY OR EXPEDIENCY.

THE Tithe was ever a law, but never a limit of giving. It is the token of our constant allegiance to Him for whom we should use all things.

The study of "Tithes" demands labor and richly repays it, for we easily misrepresent when we are not at pains to understand. Those who calculate how unequally different incomes are affected by tithes, fail to allow for differences of habit and taste; they do not consider the tithe as a religious duty, nor that the blessing of God can make it an equal one, nor that imperative obligations come upon the rich from which the poor are free. The danger of neglecting these obligations is the snare of the wealthy, but devotion is the solace of the humble. Without God's providential care, the poor widow commended by our Lord, will appear improvident and fanatical.

We are backward to adopt system in religious duties through natural pride and selfishness, yet system promotes humility and liberality. We cannot doubt the benefit of a system which God signally blesses.

Another great prejudice against tithes arises from the fact that when the duty was acknowl-

edged, and its necessity, those who were in authority made penalties to follow its neglect. This was presumptuous, and the consequences of their great error have been harmful to this day. Any religious duty may thus be made odious and oppressive. This fact must be considered in seeking the truth concerning tithes, for the offering of them to God is as truly worship as prayer, and should be equally free and willing. We may expect, under God's blessing, a return to the practice of tithing when we return to an humble, grateful and substantial worship, and to the constant recognition of God's never-failing providence. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." Two things seem essential to the wholesome maintenance of tithes :

1st. FAITH. They should be offered to God absolutely: He should have the sole honor of them.

2d. LOYALTY. They should be dutifully and gratefully offered: no outward constraint may exact them.

To those who delight in sound reasoning, and to all seekers after truth, Leslie's Essay will be truly welcome.

For two hundred years this Essay has stood in its symmetry and strength; too full for ordinary appetites, too rich for untrained minds, its important subject, too generally unattractive.

I seek to renew its publicity and popularity,

and follow the argument simply, to its conclusion. By omitting much and adding little, I would increase its usefulness, but I cannot add to its excellence, therefore I refer the interested reader to the original Essay for full proofs and particular details.

Rev. Charles Leslie, a famous divine of the Church of England, wrote in the latter part of the seventeenth century (1680-1700). A full copy of his Essay was recently published in Toronto, Canada (Rowsell & Hutchinson).

CHAS. R. BONNELL.

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INTRODUCTION.

ST. Clemens Romanus, writing to the Corinthians about the schism which had unhappily broken out in their Church, spent most of his Epistle to them in guarding them against the sins of pride and contention, as the Apostle Paul had done in both his Epistles to them, knowing that these were the roots whence their schism grew, and all schisms do grow. And that if they could once return from their pride, into the frame of a meek and truly humble spirit, their schism would soon wither and decay. This is the most effectual method to strike at the root of a disease; without this there can be no thorough cure.

This is the method I have chose in the subject I have undertaken: to make my entrance with some considerations concerning that trust and dependence which we ought to have in God; the want of which is the root of all covetousness, which is therefore called idolatry, because it transfers our trust from God to Mammon. And covetousness is so the root of sacrilege; that, as no man would rob God for nought, so can none return from his sacrilege till he is

cured of that covetousness which caused it; and covetousness cannot be cured while we are possessed with that distrust of God, which naturally leads to covetousness, and is the cause of it. And while we remain in that frame, no arguments can prevail, or charms have power over such an adder as is deaf to everything but gain.

Therefore I have begun at the root. And let no reader think this subject of trust of God (because it is so common) unworthy of his consideration; for none upon earth have it as they ought to have: and we are to increase in it; and that must be by often meditation upon it, which, by the grace of God (without which we can do nothing), is the most effectual means to strengthen ourselves in it. However, it is necessary to the business I am now upon. And to offend those, as little as may be, who may think it is a needless preparative, I have been very short upon it.

SECTION I.

Of Trust in God.

When God created man, He instituted a worship which He commanded man to pay Him, as his Creator; because the supreme happiness of man consists in the knowledge and enjoyment of God. And the greatest misery man can fall into is to forsake God, and seek for happiness anywhere else: because, so, he must seek it where it is not to be found.

The great worship of God is our trust and dependence upon Him as the sovereign Disposer of all things in heaven and on earth.

But this must be expressed, not only with our lips, but in our actions.

And if we did really believe it, we would be as ready to trust to it, where life or estate were concerned, as in the smallest matters.

But because many may think they have it, when they have it not; and that this trust and absolute dependence upon God is apt, in our weak minds, to decay and die, unless it be stirred up and kept alive by frequent instances and fresh experiments of God's power and protection over us, for want of which (and by the loose-

ness of our lives), men are brought to look only, or chiefly, to second causes, and to trust in them; therefore, God, in His all-wise dispensations, has required from us continual proofs of our dependence upon Him, even as to our subsistence and the very necessities of our life.

Thus He commanded Abram to quit his country and his father's house, all his relations and acquaintance, and to travel into a strange country, where "He gave him none inheritance, no, not so much as to set his foot on" (Acts vii: 5), but to depend wholly upon His Providence to support him. And so he lived, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the twelve patriarchs, as strangers and pilgrims upon the earth (Heb. xi: 13).

He led the children of Israel through a waste and barren wilderness, where, for forty years together, He fed them with manna from heaven, and brought water out of the flinty rock, "That He might make them know that man doth not live by bread only (by the means of second or natural causes), but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live (Deut. viii: 3), *i.e.*, God can support by what means and methods He pleases; and secondary means have no virtue but what they receive from Him.

And to keep their dependence continually upon God, no more manna was given than for one day at once, and command was given to

gather no more than the proportion allotted for one day.

The like absolute dependence did Christ require in His Apostles, when He commanded them to provide neither gold nor silver for their journey (Matt. x: 9); and has instructed us, as the Israelites in their daily manna, to pray for our bread day by day, and to trust God for the morrow.

When the Israelites were settled in Canaan, three times every year, all the men in the whole nation were commanded to leave all their frontiers unguarded, and to come up to Jerusalem to attend the solemn feasts there (Exod. xxxiv: 23, 24). Here the objection rises naturally, that they being often, almost always in war with their neighbor nations, and these nations knowing the times of these their feasts, when all their country was left destitute of men, except Jerusalem, whither they all went, their enemies should watch these times and make inroads upon the country, which no men were left to defend.

But, for a security from this, God commands them to depend wholly upon His promise, "Neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God, thrice in the year." He not only promises that none shall invade their land, but that no man should so much as desire it, at those times, though all the rest of the year they were at open wars with them.

Take another instance. Every seventh year was to be a Sabbath ; they were neither to plow nor sow, neither reap that which groweth of itself (Levit. xxv : 5, 11). And the objection is put, verse 20, " And if ye shall say, What shall we eat the seventh year? Behold we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase." And the answer is given in the next verses, " Then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years; and ye shall sow the eighth year, and eat yet of old fruit, until the ninth year; until her fruits come in, ye shall eat of the old store."

And to this they were to trust their very lives, they were to starve if it failed.

But if they should trust entirely to these promises of God, then God assures them of His blessing for it (verses 18, 19), both to protect their land from their enemies and to feed them to the full in it.

But, on the other hand, if they would not trust absolutely to God, then the secondary causes shall not help them wherein they trusted. God commands all the courses of nature to their punishment, if they disobey, as well as to their benefit, if they trust in Him.

They neglected to observe the Sabbatical year for 490 years, in which time there are 70 Sabbatical or seventh years; and the captivity in Babylon was, by God, determined to that exact

number of 70 years, as it is written, to fulfil the word of the Lord, by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths; for as long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfil three-score and ten years (2 Chron. xxxvi : 21).

We are but tenants at will, and are to look upon nothing, in this world, as our inheritance: God only is the proprietor, and hath given us but a tenure of use to live upon His land, but not to think it our own.

They were to trust absolutely in God, in His blessing upon their labors; and therefore to fear lest they should, through any act of covetousness, argue the least distrust in Him, or to think that acts of charity and trust in God, and His blessing upon their obedience to His commands, would not yield them greater increase than their usury, or any human methods that could be devised.

As God required our absolute dependence upon Him, as to necessities of life and protection from our enemies, in the instances before told, so to show further that it was not our own endeavors to which we owed our preservation, He reserved to Himself portions of time, to be abstracted from worldly business, and employed wholly in His immediate service and worship.

As God required a weekly seventh part of our time, so has He, for the same reason (to teach us

to trust and depend upon Him for all that we have or expect), required from us (as will be shown) a constant tenth part of our substance as a yearly tribute, beside other offerings, sacrifices, charities to the poor and occasional expenses, for a constant and daily exercise of our faith, without which it would decay, and at last die, as a body without daily food.

It is said that the just do live by faith (Rom. i: 17), and that they grow from faith to faith, which supposes a daily increase and daily nourishment.

Men cannot live long upon one meal, though never so plentiful. And a man is not said to live upon a dainty which he but seldom tastes. What a man lives upon is his daily food. And the just could not be said to live by faith, if they exerted only now and then some one heroical act of faith; as Abram sacrificing his son, and the like.

Nay, they could not show such extraordinary strength of faith, upon some particular occasions, if they did not daily feed upon it and improve it. Such gigantic faith grows not all at once; and the spiritual, as well as bodily activity, is not improved without constant exercise, which makes perfect, in thoughts as well as actions, in faith, in love, in everything.

We must learn to fight before we come to the battle. If we have not a habit of faith we

can never exert great acts ; and habits cannot be acquired without often repeated acts. To this end were tithes and Sabbaths instituted, to use us to frequent and daily acts of faith ; and till we are well used to these we can never rise to higher. As a chief argument against tithes is thinking them too much to give to God, and proceeds from a diffidence in Him, and a trusting to secondary means for our wealth and prosperity, it was necessary to show how great a dependence God has all along required upon Himself ; and that our wealth and health, and all, even worldly prosperity, is more to be attained by our observance of His commands than by our own endeavors or craft : for it is only His blessing which maketh increase, and giveth success to all secondary means, which was wonderfully exemplified in the insensible multiplication of a few loaves and fishes, by the blessing of our Saviour, to feed many thousands. And it is such a blessing of God upon our honest endeavors which gives us increase ; and this holds true in every thing, in all and every circumstance of our lives, though we perceive it not, but think foolishly that all is the effect of our own industry and wit ; and we sacrifice to our net (as the Prophet speaks, Habbak. i: 16), to those secondary means, by which our portion is fat and our meat plenteous.

SECTION II.

Judgments upon Distrust.

These are recapitulated in Psalm lxxviii, and applied to us in 1 Cor. x: 11. The sin of distrust in God is as heinous as that of idolatry itself, and, no doubt, is the reason that covetousness is called idolatry (Eph. v: 5; Col. iii: 5); for the covetous man is he that trusts in his riches; and trust being the highest act of worship, consequently we make that our God wherein we trust.

SECTION III.

Of Trust in Riches.

How hard it is not to trust in riches! and it is very easily known when we do so; for while we have that wherein we trust, our heart is at rest, and we fear not; but when we want that wherein our trust is, we faint and are discouraged. Now, who is not discouraged and fears want when he has no money? And whose heart is not filled up, and thinks himself secure, when he has money enough? Who is not apt to sing the rich man's

requiem, "Thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry?" (Luke xii : 19). This made our Saviour pronounce it as impossible for those who trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God, as for a camel to go through the eye of a needle (Mark x : 24). Indeed, it is impossible for any who trust in their riches and look from them for peace, health and happiness, so much as to understand, or have the least notion of the kingdom, that is, the power and government of God over all things; because whoever has a just and true apprehension of the sovereign power of the Almighty must see that all secondary causes are absolutely in His hands, and have no force or virtue at all but what He gives them. They receive all their virtue from Him, it is His power alone, not His and theirs together; and He will not give His glory to another (Isa. xlii : 8). He must have all our heart, or none; therefore He said, "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon" (Matt. vi : 24). He is a jealous God, and will admit of no rivals.

If we place our love and dependence upon anything else than God we are sure to be disappointed, because nothing else can afford satisfaction.

There is nothing that has any desirable or profitable quality but what it received from God, not only at first when He made it, but

every minute that He conserves it, without which it would immediately fall into its first nothing.

God has, from the beginning, guarded us with the greatest caution against avarice and trusting in riches, and He commands us to make sacrifices of our substance upon His altar, as a part of His worship.

SECTION IV.

*That some part of our substance is due to God,
as an act of worship.*

We are not only to worship God with our lips and give Him praises with our tongue (Prov. iii: 9); but He has required that we should pay Him an active honor, that is, worship Him with our substance.

This is a necessary part of that glory which we must give to God, and as much preferable to verbal praises as deeds are more than words. The Psalmist describes this plainly (Psalm xcvi: 8), "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name," or, "the glory of His name," as our margin reads it. What is that glory? The next words show it, "Bring an offering and come into His courts."

Hence that command is so oft repeated that none should appear empty before the Lord. (Exod. xxiii: 15 ; xxxiv: 20 ; Deut. xvi: 16, 17.)

When we approach to worship God, we must sacrifice more or less of our Mammon before Him ; to show that we depend upon God for our whole subsistence, and that Mammon is not our God.

“I will not offer unto the Lord my God,” said David, “of that which doth cost me nothing” (2 Sam. xxiv : 24).

All Christians grant that some part of our substance is due to God. Nay, this is a notion wherein all mankind do agree, and have, since the beginning of the world. No nation was ever so barbarous that did not sacrifice to some god or other. And though the outward typical bloody sacrifices have ceased among Christians, since Christ, the true and only propitiatory sacrifice, offered His own blood for us upon the cross, yet I hope there is not any Christian to be found who thinks that we are therefore released from the command of honoring the Lord with our substance, and disposing of some part of our money, though not in beasts for sacrifices, yet in the service of God, which never did consist wholly in the sacrifice of beasts.

It being, therefore, granted, that some part of our substance is due to God, let us inquire what that part is, or whether God has left us to give

what part we please, and in what manner we think fit.

Our offerings, being a part of God's worship, cannot be paid after our fancies, but as God has appointed.

To give alms to a poor man is an act of charity and commanded by God, but it is not a direct act of worship or devotion. Every good act we do may be construed to be a worship of God, as being done in obedience to His command; and thus every act of our life may be counted an act of worship, because "whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do," we are commanded to "do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. x: 31). But all these acts have ever been distinguished from the acts of direct worship, which are to be regulated strictly according to the positive command of God in Scripture, and are to be done absolutely to God, without reference to any other being.

In general actions of morality we are left to the general guidance of our reason, according to the general directions of the Scripture, and the ordinary assistance of the Holy Spirit.

But in the more direct acts of worship commanded by Revelation, there are particular and peculiar promises annexed to the performance, and a more than ordinary assistance of the Holy Spirit of God.

Therefore, what part of our substance God has reserved as a part of His worship is not to be

reckoned among bare acts of charity, but must be offered in such manner and method as He has commanded.

SECTION V.

Of the determinate number of a Tenth.

There seems to be a natural aptitude in the number ten, beyond that of any other, which forces all mankind, without concerting, to multiply by it. God teaches us to count ten upon our fingers. And being thus, in many respects, the most perfect of numbers, comprehending all single numbers, it seems the most fit and proper number wherein to pay our tribute to God, thus acknowledging that all we enjoy and all our increase is His, and comes from Him.

Moreover, ten being the utmost number, one in ten *is the unit*, the least complete number and the least proportion that could be reserved; for one in nine would be a greater proportion of our goods, and one in eight a greater than that.

But now, by matter of fact, to determine this cause of tithe. It is, in the first place, very evident that a tenth part of all increase was reserved as such under the Law; and that it was to be

offered to the priests, not only as a maintenance to them, but *as an offering unto the Lord*, in the same nature as other offerings and sacrifice: "The tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer as an heave offering *unto the Lord*" (Numb. xviii : 24). "All the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the trees, is the Lord's; it is holy unto the Lord" (Levit. xxvii : 30). "Thither shall ye bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hands, and your vows, and your free-will offerings, and the firstlings of your herds, and of your flocks" (Deut. xii : 6).

Here the tithes are reckoned in the same rank with the sacrifices and other offering and vows (although distinguished from these ceremonial offerings); as they are again (Deut. xxvi : 13), where they are called "the hallowed things." And hence the subtraction of tithes is called a robbing of God, and that equally with the subtracting of the other offerings of the Lord. "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me: but ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse; for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation" (Mal. iii : 8, 9).

SECTION VI.

A Tenth required before the Law ; shown in Abram and Jacob.

But the tithe was not a particular institution only to the Jews, under the Law ; it had a more ancient rise.

That it was before the Law is evident from the example of Abram, who paid tithes to Melchisedec (Gen. xiv: 20); and of Jacob, who vowed his tithes to God (chap. xxviii: 22).

The Epistle to the Hebrews argues the greatness of Melchisedec above Abram, from Abram's paying of tithes to him (ch. vii: 4). For when anything is paid as a tribute, or a rent due, it argues the greatness of the receiver above that of the payer. And the preference given to Melchisedec was in respect of his character, because he was a priest, whose office it was to bless in the name of the Lord.

It is hence made manifest that the tithe which Abram paid to Melchisedec was paid in the true notion of tithe as tithe, and a tribute which was due to Melchisedec, as he was priest of the Most High God. The Greek word is observable, verse 6, *ὁ ἐδεξάτο αὐτοῦ*, that is, Melchisedec tithed Abram.

And because it was part of the priest's office

to receive the Lord's tithe, a receiver of tithe and a priest are terms synonymous. Thus, in this same chapter, Heb. vii, it is said, verse 8, here men that die receive tithe (that is, under the Law the priests were mortal, and therefore there was a necessity of their succeeding one another); but there (that is, in the case of Christ, typified by Melchisedec) He (*i.e.*, Christ) receiveth them (tithes) of whom it is witnessed that He liveth, *i.e.*, liveth forever, and so is not to be succeeded by any other high-priest. And He ever liveth to receive our tithe, that is, forever to be our High-Priest; for a priest and a receiver of tithe are here made to be the same. He (Christ) receiveth them (the tithes); that is, in the language of this text, He is our Priest.

And in repeating the same thing over again, verse 23, the word priests is put for those who are called receivers of tithe in the 8th verse; for, speaking of the mortality of the high-priests of the tribe of Levi, it is expressed thus in the 8th verse, "here men that die receive tithes:" and, verse 23, it is thus worded, "they were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death." Then when, in the comparison, the eternity of the priesthood of Christ is set forth, it is said, verse 24, because He continueth ever, He hath an unchangeable priesthood; which is expressed, verse 8, by saying that He ever liveth to receive tithes, which is

the same as being a priest, as the text runs, but there He (Christ) receiveth them (tithes), of whom it is witnessed that He liveth.

Forasmuch, then, as Christ is our ever-abiding High-Priest, He has continuously the right or title to receive the tithes of God; for tithes as part of Divine worship are to be paid, as such, unto Him.

Originally the priesthood was joined with the regal power, and kings were priests, as was Melchisedec. And we have many later instances in other nations of the same. Whence arose that mistake in some that tithes were paid to kings, as kings, not considering that this was a tribute paid to them as priests. And if kings have preserved a tenth to themselves out of lands they gave to their subjects, as any other landlord may do; or if kings exacted a tenth, by way of tax, or such a tax was given to them; yet this is not the tithe of God concerning which we now speak, for that was part of our worship of God. And such was the tithe paid by Abram to Melchisedec; for how did he owe him that tribute as King of Salem? Or how was that an expression of Abram's thankfulness to God for the great victory he then obtained? which paying the tithe of the spoils to God by the hands of His priest was; and the blessing of God, pronounced by the mouth of His priest, was His acceptance of it and assurance of His favor to Abram.

But Christ, our great High Priest, is also Lord of all: He is the great King; wherefore in both offices the tithe is His by Divine right.

The next record of tithes previous to the Law is that of Jacob's vow.

Men often and most commonly vow that which is their duty to do, without respect to the vow; as, to vow to serve God more faithfully than we have done before. Thus, in this same vow of Jacob's he vows that the Lord shall be his God. Will any say that the Lord was not his God before?

This dedicating the tithe to God was a declaration that the Lord was his God, because offering of tithe was a part of the worship of God. And, therefore, Jacob did by this declare that the Lord only should be his God, because he would offer his tithe only unto Him.

It was the custom of the nations among the heathen to offer their tithes to the god whom they adored; and, therefore, some offered their tithes to one and some to another of their false gods. But Jacob here vows to the only true God that He only shall be his God, and that he will offer his tithes to none other God, but to Him alone.

For to whom we dedicate the tithe we acknowledge to have received the other nine parts from him, of which the offering of the tenth is a solemn acknowledgment.

And the vowing or dedicating them, though due before, was customary with the Jews as well as the heathen.

SECTION VII.

That the Gentiles did pay Tithes to their Gods.

The practice of the Gentiles is a testimony to the Divine right of tithes. For however they paid their tithe, this remains uncontroverted, that the notion of tithes as being due unto some god or other was received among the Gentiles, and that time out of mind. And the tenths were paid out of the first-fruits, or choicest of the whole, whence these terms of first-fruits and tithes became synonymous.

And though not always, yet often they are taken to mean the same thing, even in the Sacred Writings. And the reason is this, there were two sorts of first-fruits under the law, of which the one was the tenth and the other was not. The first sort we find, Levit. xxiii : 9, etc., where it is commanded that at the reaping of their fields they should bring a sheaf or handful of the first of the harvest unto the priest to be offered before the Lord; and before this was done they

were prohibited so much as to taste even of the green ears, verse 14.

These are called the first of the first-fruits (Exod. xxxiv: 26). But when the full harvest was brought in, then the tenth part of the whole was taken out of the first or choicest parts. And before this tenth was offered it was not lawful for the owner to convert any of the nine parts to his own use. And, therefore, these tenths were the first-fruits of the harvest; first offered to God before any of the remainder could be disposed of, and which likewise consisted of the first or principal parts of the harvest. Thus the tenths were always first-fruits, but the first-fruits were not always tenths, though this second sort of the first-fruits were always tenths. The *præmesium* or *præmetium* of the Romans before harvest, and their *florifestum* after harvest, both dedicated to Ceres, do resemble these two sorts of first-fruits.

The heathen had the notion of tithes and first-fruits being the same. Their offerings to their gods were called *δέκατρες ὅροι ἀπαρχαὶ*, that is, first-fruits in tenths.

In Selden's "History of Tithes," c. 3, he confesses it to be the custom of the Gentiles to offer the tithe to their gods, and gives several instances, for example, of the Arabians and Phœnicians in Asia, among whom Melchisedec was both a king and a priest; the Carthaginians and Egyp-

tians in Africa, and the Grecians and Romans in Europe. And (ch. 10, n. 1) he brings it as far west as England, and shows it to have been the custom here, even among those who had not yet received Christianity, as of King Cedwalla, about the year 686, before he was a Christian, and others.

Pliny, in his "Natural History," 1, 12, c. 14, witnesses of the Arabians, who paid tithe to their god Sabis. And (ch. 19) of the Ethiopians, who paid their tithe to their god Assabinus. And this they observed so strictly, that it was not lawful for the merchants to buy or sell any of their goods till the priests had first taken out the tenth for their gods.

Plutarch, in the life of Camillus, tells not only how religiously the Romans observed the payment of their tithes to their gods, but likewise that the same regard was had to them among the Liparians. For when, after Camillus' conquest of the city of Veies, the Augurs had made report that the gods were greatly offended (though for what they knew not), which they found by the marks and observations they made of their sacrifices. And Camillus having informed the Senate, that in the sacking of Veies the soldiers had taken the spoil without giving the tenth to the gods; and whereas the soldiers had, most of them, spent or disposed of what they had taken, the Senate ordered every man to give in

upon oath what he had got of the booty, and to pay a tenth of it, or the value if it was spent, to the gods. And besides this, a cup of gold, of eight talents, to be sent to the temple of Apollo, at Delphos, as a trespass-offering. Toward which the women brought in their jewels and gold of their own free will so readily, that the Senate, in honor to them, gave them a privilege, which before had been denied them, of having orations in their praise made at their funerals, which formerly had been allowed only to great and eminent men.

And they appointed three of the first quality in Rome to carry this present, with the tithes, in a triumphant manner to Delphos.

In the way they were taken and made prize by the Liparians. But when brought to their city, and the governor understanding that so great a booty was tithes due to the gods, he not only restored it all, and sent them away with it, but gave them a convoy of his own ships to secure them in their voyage, though he was then at war with them.

The Greeks had the same notion of the Divine Right of Tithes, which Xenophon tells us, and gives a remarkable instance of it (*De Exped. Cyr.*, l. 5), that the Grecian army whom he conducted in that memorable retreat, after the death of Cyrus, reserved a tenth of the money they got upon their march, to be offered to Apollo and

Diana. But Xenophon reserved the tithe of his share to be offered at Delphi and Ephesus. With this he built a temple to Diana, and bought lands wherewith to endow it, of which he paid the tithe to her. And near the temple set up a pillar with this inscription: GROUND SACRED TO DIANA. WHOSOEVER POSSESSETH IT, LET HIM PAY THE TITHE OF HIS YEARLY INCREASE: AND OUT OF THE REMAINDER MAINTAIN THE TEMPLE. IF HE NEGLECT THIS, THE GODDESS WILL REQUIRE IT.

Many more instances are found in the Greek and Latin stories.

From whom had the Gentiles the traditions of tithing? If they thought the tithes so sacred to the gods that they made conscience of paying them, without the compulsion of any temporal law, this shows the notion which they had of tithes to be from a higher original than any municipal laws, and that they thought them to be due *jure divino*.

This custom was so very general, that to tithe *δεκατεδωαι*, was used to mean the consecrating of anything to God. And, for the same reason among the Romans, the best and choicest parts were called *edecumata*, and *decumanum* meant the greatest and fairest, because the tithes were paid of the best and choicest parts.

“Thus in Italy the custom was to pay and vow tithes to their deities, and continued in use till the latter times of the Empire.” And

“*Εθος ην ἑλληρικὸν δεκάτος των περιγινόμενων τοις θεοῖς χαθεροῦν.*” It was a Greek custom to consecrate the tithe of their abundance or increase to the gods. And, *mos erat Herculi decimam profanari*, among the Romans. It was the custom to dedicate tithes to Hercules.

The notion which all the world ever had of tithes was as a tribute or acknowledgment to God, for what He had bestowed upon us. I know no other notion that any man can have in offering of his tithes to God.

The Gentiles were very devout in giving of their yearly increase to the honor of their deities, and of an ancient inscription to Fortune, made by Taurinus in honor of his father Cæsius, who paid his tithes to the goddess Fortune, he says, *omnibus hic annis*; i.e., that he paid his tithes to her every year. And Herodotus tells us that the inhabitants of Siphnus gave yearly tithes of their mines to Apollo; and from Callimachus, that yearly tithe was brought to Delos for the same god. Multitudes of the like instances may be brought.

The question is not to which of the gods the Gentiles did pay their tithe? but whether they paid it to any of them? And if they paid it to any, or all of their gods, it shows their opinion that tithes, as sacrifices, were due to the gods; for all did not sacrifice to the same god, nor always to the gods in general, but most com-

monly to some particular god to whom they devoted themselves; and the same is to be said of offering their tithes. The Romans might dedicate them most frequently to the god of war, and the Greeks to Apollo, the god of learning; but this was not exclusive of the other gods, as if none of them had any right to tithes but only Hercules or Apollo. The Pelasgi that transplanted themselves into Italy sent their tithe to Apollo at Delphi; Camillus gave the tenth of his spoils to Apollo; Posthumius spent forty talents of the tithe of his spoils, after his victory against the Latins, upon sacrifices and prayers in honor of the gods, and with what remained, built a temple to Ceres, Bacchus and Proserpina. Tithes were generally given to the gods without any particular design, and were spent on their general worship.

The end of offering tithes to God can be no other (as has been said) than a due acknowledgment for the past increase which God has given to our labors, in whatever vocation, and to implore the continuance of His blessing upon our after-labors; this reason reaches to all things which we have received from God, or expect to receive from Him (Prov. iii: 9). "Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase;" all increase of whatever sort. And the same was the notion of the Gentiles; they tithed their estates, their substance, τὰς οὐσιᾶς, which is, everything that they had.

The Gentiles had retained, and withal corrupted the primitive institutions of sacrifices, of tithes, etc., which were given by God to Adam and the patriarchs before the flood. These were revived in the Law of Moses, but not borrowed from the Gentiles, from whose customs the Jews were commanded to abstain.

God would not forsake His own institutions because the Gentiles did retain them, though they abused them to the worship of false gods.

“The ancients did offer the tithes of all to their gods, *i.e.*, all of them—of all things—to all their gods—and always, or in the ordinary course of their religion.”

Dr. Spencer adds this of Montacute, viz., “That some have been found in history who did not sacrifice; but none, in all the annals of time, who did not pay tithes. Nor was this strange, since tithes were as frequent among the heathens as altars, first-fruits, vows, oblations or idols.”

SECTION VIII.

The Original of Tithes.

It is now time to see how far upward we can trace the practice of tithes, that, if possible, we

may find its beginning. There is no account how it began among the Gentiles. It was time out of mind with them; as ancient as any thing which their histories contained. The Attic Law, for paying of tithes, is said, Mr. Selden tells us, to have come from Triptolemus, and he was cotemporary with Moses.

But this cannot be the original of tithes, for we find them long before. "It is not unlikely but that the ancient and most known examples of Abram gave the first ground both to them (the Phœnicians in Asia, and from them to the Carthaginians in Africa), and to the Europeans, so, sometimes to dispose of the tenth of their spoils of war to holy uses."

Melchisedec is the first of whom express mention is made that he received tithes. He is the first, likewise, whom we read of called by the name of priest. Yet none doubts but that there were priests before. As little can we doubt but tithes were paid before. For his tithing of Abram is not mentioned as the introduction of any new custom; which, if it had been then new, would have been told, else who had known what it meant? But, on the contrary, the Apostle argues (Heb. vii), as we have seen, that this tithe was paid as a tribute due to Melchisedec, as he was "priest of the Most High God;" and thence infers the greatness of Melchisedec above Abram. And this shows undeniably that the

notion of tithes, as due to the priests, was known before that time; for otherwise Abram could not have paid them under that notion, which St. Paul says he did.

We must pass the Flood to search for a higher original of tithes. And of this dark time we have no history remaining but that only of Genesis. And that is very brief, and touches but upon few things, being chiefly designed to deduce the genealogy of Israel from the beginning of the world.

Yet even in that short summary we have no obscure light given us as to tithes. We find, in the first place, the general notion of honoring the Lord with our substance, *i.e.*, offering to him some part of our increase (Gen. iv: 3, 4); and secondly, that there was a determinate part appears from the LXX's translation of Gen. iv: 7. *Ὅτι ἐὰν ὀρθῶς προσενέγκῃς, ὀρθῶς καὶ μὴ διέλῃς, ἡμαρτες; ἢ σὺ ἥχασον, i.e.*, if thou has offered aright, but hast not divided aright, hast thou not sinned? hold thy peace.

The authority of this translation is supported by its being so frequently quoted in the New Testament, even where it seems to add to the Hebrew text.

Let the LXX translation stand as, at least, the best comment now extant of the Old Testament. And this cannot be denied to it, it being generally quoted, not only by the Apostles, but

the Fathers of the first 400 years. And as to this present text (Gen. iv: 7), it is quoted literally as I have set it down, according to the LXX, in *St. Clem. Rom. Ep. ad Corinth.*, n. 4., in *Irenæus adv. Hæres.* l. 4, c. 34, and in others of those primitive Fathers. Tertullian (*advers. Judæos*, n. 2) says that God rejected the sacrifice of Cain, because *quod offerebat, non recte dividebat*; i.e., he did not divide aright that which he offered. And this is more intelligible than our translation, which gives no account of the reason why God rejected the offering of Cain; but the LXX does, and the primitive Fathers who followed it, viz., that Cain did not divide aright, that is, he did not offer the full quantum which he ought. And Grotius says that the sense of this text, according to the LXX, was that Cain did not offer of the best, or else that he gave a less proportion than the tenth. "Which," says he "from the most ancient ages was the portion due to God, and that the footsteps of it are everywhere to be found in the Greek and Latin Histories."

The quantity is chiefly, nay only, noted in this text.* For not dividing aright, which is the sin charged upon Cain, respects only the quantity. The quality is not to be divided. And if there was no certain quantity required, then could not Cain have been charged with offering less. For where there is no law there is no transgression.

* See Greek text in Heb. xi: 4.

Now then it remains that there was a required part and that it was enjoined. Let us next inquire who it was that enjoined it. And that must be either Adam, or God immediately. For there were none other superior to Cain. But if Adam did enjoin it as a law, to continue forever among all his posterities, it will have a very great obligation beyond that of the Rechabites. And, in the next place, it cannot be imagined that Adam should make such a standing and universal law without directions from God. For such we must suppose all the laws which Adam gave to be.

But chiefly considering that this was a part of the worship of God; and God has always prescribed the methods of his own worship, and left it not to our wild imaginations to invent what means and ways of worship we thought fit, which would be as various and foolish as every man's fancy, and wholly unworthy the majesty of God.

We cannot imagine but that God gave Adam directions concerning His own worship. Shall we say that sacrificing was a pure invention of Adam's, or of Cain or Abel's?

What reason can any man give why killing of a beast should be thought a giving it to God, or a worship of God? Why burning of it? Why the fat, which we find noted in Abel's sacrifice? And why a firstling? But there is more than

this. Sacrifices were appointed as types of Christ, our true Passover, who is sacrificed for us. And Adam could have no knowledge of Christ but by Revelation, which was given to him (Gen. iii : 15). And, therefore, without a Revelation he could not have invented sacrifices to represent and exhibit the death of Christ to come. Or if he had invented it, yet he could not have appointed it as an act of worship without express command of God. For all acts of worship are means of grace, whereby God does convey His grace to us; and has obliged Himself by His promise so to do when there is not a failing on our part. Now God cannot be obliged but by Himself; and therefore if any man take upon him to appoint any worship of God, he does thereby pretend to limit God, and appoint Him means whereby He shall be obliged to convey His graces, upon such terms and conditions as we please to chalk out for Him. And this is a high blasphemy.

Some foolishly apply this to indifferent ceremonies appointed by the Church in the worship of God; which are nothing else but observing that order and decency in the service of God which the Apostle has commanded, but no part of the worship itself. Circumstances of time, place, habit, gesture, etc., are inseparable from public worship, and the determination of these, by a lawful authority, we call ceremonies, which

have no other virtue but the command of such authority. Nor are they appointed as any means of grace at all, whereby any grace, either ghostly or bodily, is conveyed to us.

This sufficiently shows that sacrifices were neither of Adam's invention nor of his appointment, otherwise than as he had received commandment for it from God, and delivered the same to his children (*Hist. Schol.* in Gen. xxvi). As Peter Comestor says, that Adam, by the Spirit, did teach his sons to offer tithes and first-fruits to God. And Hugo de St. Victore says, that God taught Adam how to worship Him, and that Adam taught his sons to give tithes and first-fruits (*Annot.* in Gen. iv).

This is farther evident, in that it is said (Heb. xi : 4) that Abel offered by faith. Now faith has only relation to God and to His commands. To obey the command of a parent or magistrate is not called faith. And if we think to please God by a worship of our own invention, and have faith or trust in Him that He will accept it, this is presumption in us. It is superstition, and hateful to God, and which the Scripture would never call faith in God. Therefore since Abel did offer in faith, it is a necessary consequence that the thing was commanded of God.

God did, at the beginning, appoint the first-lings and the fat of beasts for sacrifice ; so did He appoint a determinate quantity of the fruits,

else Cain had not been condemned for not dividing aright.

It is allowed that sacrifices and priesthood and marriage were instituted at first by God, and that they descended, by immemorial tradition, from Adam to the heathen nations, who knew not of Adam, nor the beginning of the world, nor how these institutions began. But it was concluded, and that by a sure rule, that those institutions which were universally received, and whose beginning was not known, must certainly be from the beginning.

Now tithe, as well as any of these before-named, was universally received among the Gentiles; and its beginning was not known more than any of the rest; and therefore tithe must have been from the beginning as well as any of the other.

Consider, I beseech you, how otherwise tithes could have come to have been so universally received. Suppose all the world to be agreed that some part of all our substance was due to God, but that no determinate part was appointed, but every man left in that to His own fancy or inclination? How should all the world hit upon the same number of a tenth, more than a fifth, fifteenth, or any other number? nations far distant from one another, who knew not of one another, nor held any correspondence?

These are things so unaccountable that it is

not left in any man's power, who will consider of it, to believe that tithes were any human invention ; or that the notion of it could have spread itself so universally through the world, if it had not descended from our first parent, and so flowed from the fountain through the many divided streams.

The Jews were a contemptible people in the eyes of the Gentiles, and abhorred of them. And, therefore, it is nowise likely that the Gentiles would learn from them, especially such an expensive worship as would cost them the yearly tenth of all that they possessed. And on the other hand, the Jews were strictly forbidden to learn the customs of the Gentiles; they thought the Gentiles so impure as that it was not lawful to marry, no, nor to eat with them; and, therefore, it is improbable that the Jews should part with the tenth of all their yearly increase because the Gentiles did so.

The Law was given to the Jews after they came out of Egypt, so that the Egyptians nor any other could have learned it from them while they stayed there. It was given them in the wilderness, where for forty years they conversed with no other nation, and where Moses died. Now Triptolemus, king of Attica, before mentioned, who made the Attic Law, *θεῶν χαρίποις ἀγαλλεῖν*—"to honor the gods with their fruits," which, as Porphyry repeats it, was, "That all the

inhabitants of Attica should worship the gods, according to their estates, with first-fruits and offerings of wine every year" (*Porphyr. de Abstin.*, Lib. iv, sec. ult., p. 179); and ἀπαρχὰς ποιεῖσθαι, which is Porphyry's expression for offering of their fruits to the gods, and was his phrase for paying of tithe; as was usual with all others, in those times, both sacred and profane writers. I say, this Triptolemus was cotemporary with Moses, and, for the reasons before told, could not have learned the notion of tithes from him or the Jews in his time; and yet Triptolemus is not said to have been the first who brought the notion of tithes among the Gentiles; only that he made laws for it in his own country, which supposes the thing to be known before.

That instance of Abram's paying tithe to Melchisedec the priest, was told only occasionally, not as the original of tithes or of priesthood, more than his paying current money with the merchant to Ephron (Gen. xxiii: 16) was the original of money or merchandise, because we never read of money or of merchants before. And there is as much ground to suppose that the Gentiles learned the use of money from Abram's paying money to Ephron, as that they learned the use of tithes from his paying tithes to Melchisedec.

How should all the far distant nations of the earth know, and take such notice of this single

act of Abram's, who was but a traveler and sojourner in Canaan, so as to make it their pattern and example? How should they have this notion all at once? Would not some footsteps or account of it remain in history, how it was received from one nation to another? If that of Abram was the original of tithes, would not their beginning be found in some nation or other? What wild and unaccountable imaginations are these?

But the truth is, the Gentiles neither learned the notion of tithes from Abram or the Jews, nor the Jews from the Gentiles, more than the notions of sacrifices, of priesthood, of marriage, which were received from the beginning of the world, and deduced through the after generation as well of Jews as Gentiles.

Tithes must be as ancient as sacrifices; for tithes were a sacrifice. They were the quantum of the sacrifice, and they must be as ancient as priesthood; for they were given by God, as a maintenance to his priests, and always so understood. To sacrifice was the office of the priest, and the tithe was his reward. So that these being relatives, must be of equal standing.

Thus the original of tithes is shown to have been from God, at the creation; and to have descended from that time to this, through all ages and generations of men.

SECTION IX.

Tithes in the Gospel.

The Gospel was not meant to overturn any thing in the Law, but to confirm it to the least iota (Matt. v : 17, 18), by fulfilling all the types of Christ. And fulfilling is the perfection, not the destruction of anything.

All the Levitical law, except the typical, the ceremonial and the judicial, were confirmed by Christ, and needed no new injunction. Now it is evident that tithes were no part either of the typical or ceremonial law. Tithe had another end and tendency, which was an acknowledgment and homage due to God as the author of all the good we received in this world, and that it was His blessing alone which gave success and increase to our labors. This respected God as our Creator and Preserver, but had no signification as to the incarnation, sufferings, death and resurrection of Christ; and, therefore, was no type of Him; and, therefore, was not fulfilled or ended in Him. The reason of it is eternal and must last while God feeds man upon the earth, and has been ever since God created man upon the earth. It was long before the Law, and, therefore, not taking its rise from the Law, could not be abrogated in the Law. It was but anew enjoined in

the Law. Other nations were in possession of it long before the Law of Moses; and after, not from the Law of Moses, but from its original and universal obligation; and, therefore, the abrogation of the Law of Moses, had it been every word abrogated, could not have dissolved the obligation of tithes. But tithes belonging to no part of it that ceased upon the coming of Christ, consequently is still confirmed, unless it can be shown that Christ has discharged it. Christ did not anew institute the Decalogue, but left it of force, because not altered by Him; and so it is of tithes.

But Christ has given express approbation of them (Matt. xxiii : 23).

The Apostle says, that under the Law men that die received tithes; but opposing to this the Melchisedecal priesthood, which was but a type of Christ's, he says that he receiveth them (tithes) of whom it is witnessed that he liveth, *i.e.*, liveth forever; not as the Levitical priests, who were mortal, and, therefore, succeeded one another. Now Melchisedec, if mortal, died, as well as the Levitical priests; and, therefore, this was spoken only of Christ. And the Apostle says that He receiveth tithes, for it can be meant of none other. And if Christ receiveth tithes, then He has not abrogated them. Then He has confirmed them, not only negatively by not forbidding them under the Gospel, but positively,

by approving of the payment of them, and Himself, now in heaven, ever living to receive them.

Again hear St. Paul (1 Cor. ix : 13, 14), "Do ye not know that they who minister about holy things, live of the things of the temple? And they who wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel." OF THE GOSPEL. What is that? The Apostle makes the comparison, as of the altar in the Temple, that is, of the tithes and other offerings which were offered upon the altar; and, therefore, are said to belong to the altar, as being due to the altar, to be offered there; so that as the altar in the Temple had a large revenue, and the priests did partake with it, did live of it, even so hath the Lord ordained—What? That the Evangelical priests should live of the Gospel. What revenue, then, has the Gospel to maintain them? A revenue, surely, like that of the Temple. Else it is not even so, as the Apostle makes this comparison. Some would have the Gospel merely eleemosynary: nothing due, but all free-will offerings. Then I am sure it was not even so as the Temple, for there were free-will offerings, it is true, but that was not all. There were tithes, and other offerings as of obligation. Else there had been no certainty or settled maintenance. Now if the Gospel has nothing as of right, which it can claim, how is it even so as the Temple? If the priests of the Temple were

sure of a tenth, and the priests of the Gospel not of a hundredth or a thousandth part, or of any part at all, how were they provided even so as the priests of the Temple?

But what was it that the Lord ordained? That every man should pay what he pleased? That they might do, and that they would do, without any order or law made for it? Was there ever such a law made, that every man should do just what he pleased, and no more? Would not such a law be good for just nothing? that is to say, it would be no law; for law is a requiring and enjoining something, a refraining of liberty, and putting men under an obligation who were free before, as to that which the law commands; and, therefore, that which lays no restraint or obligation, but leaves every man perfectly at his own liberty, is no law; and, consequently, if every man were left to his liberty, what he pleased to give to the Gospel, then Christ here ordained just nothing: it was no ordinance or law at all. And there was no manner of comparison betwixt the Gospel and the altar, which the Apostle does compare together. The Lord ordained tithes to the altar and nothing to the Gospel! What comparison then betwixt the Gospel and the altar? The same as betwixt tithes and nothing! And how then did the Lord ordain a maintenance for the ministers of the Gospel, even so as for the ministers of the altar?

There is no coherence, no argument, no com-

parison, nor good sense can be made out of this text, unless the Lord had ordained that, as the tithes were paid to the priests of the Temple, they should be likewise paid to the priests of the Gospel. And then the comparison lies full and round, and the Apostle's argument is strong and cogent, which otherwise is precarious and inconsequential. Therefore I think that from this very text it may, nay, that it must be concluded, that the Lord has ordained tithes under the Gospel, as well as under the Law. And this text was thus understood in the first ages of the Church.

But why would not St. Paul downright name tithes, and so put the matter out of dispute? I answer: there was then no dispute at all concerning the Divine right of tithes. All the dispute that then could be was only to whom they should be paid, whether to the priests of the Temple or the Gospel? The priests of the Temple were then in possession of them, and would have raised a much more severe persecution against the Gospel if its priests had pretended to them. And, therefore, it was great prudence in the Apostles not to name tithes, not to add oil to the flames of that persecution which was like to be too strong for the ordinary sort of Christians, and overcame some of them. Yet would not the Apostles lose their right, which St. Paul, in this chapter, not only asserts, but argues for it, though he would not then make use of it, for reasons which he there declares.

SECTION X.

Tithes were paid in the days of the Apostles and first ages of Christianity.

A tenth was ordained, yet it might be exceeded, and men might give a greater proportion if they thought fit; and God did accept of what more men gave as a mark of more extraordinary devotion and zeal to His service. And, therefore, they who gave more gave the tenth.

Now, in the days of the Apostles the Christians gave not only a tenth, but their zeal was so exceeding as to sell lands, houses, etc., and give all that they had in the world, and lay it down at the Apostles' feet. And this was not a sudden heat of devotion, and soon over, it lasted many years. We find it in Justin Martyr, 160 years after Christ.—*Apolog.* 2, p. 61. "And now," says he, "we bring all that we have into common and communicate it to everyone that wants." (*Advers. Hæres.*, Lib. iv, c. 34.) And after him Irenæus, Anno. Chr. 180, tells that the Jews consecrated a tenth, but the Christians gave "all they had to God's service; and would give not less than the Jews because they had a better hope." While this great zeal and liberality lasted what reason was there to press men to give a tenth who gave a great deal

more? "So liberal, in the beginning of Christianity, was the devotion of believers, that their bounty to the Evangelical priesthood far exceeded what the tenth could have been." And p. 39, "The liberality formerly used had been such that, in respect thereof, tenths were a small part." It had been little to the purpose, indeed, to have had tithes of annual increase paid while that most bountiful devotion of good Christians continued in frequent offerings, both of lands and goods, to such large value. To say no more of the greatness of the devotions of those times, I have only this use to make of it as to my present purpose, that the Christians then giving more than a tenth had been reason sufficient, if there had not been one word in any of the Fathers of those times concerning tithes. For how could they require tithes when tithes were paid, and a great deal more?

But because there should be no sort of argument wanting in this cause, we have frequent testimonies even of the Fathers of these first ages, for tithes being due under the Gospel, as well as under the Law; and that tithes do still oblige us.

St. Irenæus, disciple to St. Polycarp, who was disciple to St. John the Apostle, says, "That we ought to offer to God the first-fruits of His creatures, as Moses said, 'You shall not appear empty before the Lord.'" Irenæus shows that

he means tenths, in the same place, by making this comparison betwixt the offerings of the Jews and the Christians, that the Jews offered a tenth, but the Christians gave all they had. And he shows how Christ did heighten the commands of the Law. As for adultery, to forbid lust, for murders, to forbid anger. And he adds this instance to the other that, instead of tithes, Christ commanded to sell all and give to the poor; "And this," says he, "is not a dissolving of the Law, but enlarging it." By which argumentation tithes are no more dissolved under the Gospel than the sixth and seventh commands. "To whom," says Origen, "we give our first-fruits, to the same we send up our prayers." By first-fruits he means tenths, as appears by his 16th Homily upon Genesis, where he says that the number ten is regarded in the New Testament as well as the Old, and says that because Christ is the author of all, therefore tithes are offered. He reckons them as having no remembrance of God, as not believing that God gave the fruits of the earth, who do not honor Him with them by giving part of them to the priests. And as I before quoted this same Homily, he likewise cites our Saviour's command to the Pharisees, telling them that they ought to pay tithe of mint, anise, cummin, etc., and shows how this is more strictly obligatory upon Christians; and concludes with proving

that the very letter of the law must stand for the payment of the first-fruits of fruits and cattle. As St. Chrysostom, by the same word of first-fruits, expresses the tithes which Abram gave to Melchisedec, calling them "the first-fruits of his labors". And Clemens Alexandrinus, who was Origen's master, used both these words in the same sense, and taught the very same thing as Origen, viz., that the Law concerning tithes was still obligatory and of force among Christians as being a moral duty and a part of God's worship. In the Apostolical Canons (*Can.* 38), it is ordered how the ἀπαρχαὶ, the first-fruits of tithes, should be disposed, which is a full demonstration that they were then paid.

Thus far we have seen the doctrine of the Church as to tithes for 240 years after Christ. In the after ages, when a greater and more universal neglect of tithes had crept in, the Fathers were voluminous upon the subject, and Councils express in requiring them under pain of excommunication, as being due to God from the beginning. The Apostolical Canons above quoted were the Canon Law that was in those times.

So that we have not only the testimony of private Fathers; but the law that then was for the payment of tithes, before the extraordinary oblations of more than a tenth did cease in the Church, though they had then no need to insist upon the tithe, because they receive a much greater proportion.

If I should take in all the Fathers about this time, I should be forced to repeat whole sermons vindicating the Divine right of tithes. None will deny but that they were full and express for tithes at that time and afterward. Only the first Fathers were not so large, having no occasion for it, while the zeal of Christians was not willing to be stinted to the bare due of a tenth, but gave much more. So that it were not strange if we had heard nothing at all from them of it. But by good Providence they have left sufficient to convince those willing to be deceived in after ages, who through covetousness and distrust of God, did forbear to pay their tithe. Till by a long custom of sinning men began to lose the sense of their sin, who yet durst not plead for the lawfulness of it. As the Jews, the whole nation of whom subtracted their tithe and were cursed of God for it (Mal. iii: 9); yet none can think that this was a sin of ignorance in them, that they disputed or forgot the positive commands of the Law for tithe; but they were not willing and so had forgot to practice it; which was the case of those careless and diffident Christians who at first only grugged to pay their tithes, then forebore it, and at last forgot it, but began not till the later most corrupt times to dispute against it.

When the Papacy had grown great upon the ruins of Episcopacy, and the Bishop of Rome

appropriated the style of Apostolical to his See alone, assuming to himself the supremacy over all other bishops, he sought to swallow up all their authority and centre it in the plenitude of his power ; and for this end it was necessary to usurp the revenues as well as authority of his colleagues, whereby he might be enabled to maintain the vast swarms of regulars whom he had set up and exempted from the jurisdiction of their respective bishops, to depend wholly upon himself, and by this he unmeasurably broke the Episcopal authority, for the seculars only were left under that small remainder of the Episcopal power which the Pope had left. Like a conqueror he seized upon the estates of those whom he had overcome as justly forfeited, and bestowed them upon those who fought on his side. The tithes of the Church, which all belonged to the bishops and their secular clergy, the Pope took upon him to alienate, and let in the regulars as sharers with them. And thus he founded monasteries and abbeys innumerable, and endowed them with the tithes of the neighboring parishes, to the lessening of the bishop's jurisdiction, impoverishing the secular clergy who depended upon them, and plentifully maintaining what numbers he pleased of the regulars who were implicitly at his command.

And to countenance and make way for these horrid sacrileges and usurpations, the Popish

canonists were first corrupted, who, forgetting *the first and chief end of tithes, which was as a worship and tribute due to God*, and insisting only upon the secondary consideration, that of being a maintenance to the clergy, they, though they owned tithes to be *jure divino*, yet gave the Pope power, as sovereign disposer of the revenues of the Church, to alienate, commute and appropriate them as he thought fit.

But this was a dangerous tenure; for while tithes were owned to be *jure divino*, the Pope's alienations might be disputed. Therefore the schoolmen, who were generally monks, made a new scheme about the year 1230, and said that the Divine and moral law extended only to a competency for the clergy; but as to the particular quantity of a tenth, that this was only of ecclesiastical institution.

But there is no stop in the art of encroachment; for, having brought down tithes so low, the begging friars after this got up, and they made tithes to be perfectly arbitrary at the will and pleasure of the giver, and not due to the secular priests; but that they were nothing else than mere alms, and consequently might be given to any religious beggar. This was a shameless preaching only for their own bellies, and to rob their enemies, the secular clergy.

But to conclude, the Popes have, in several ages, taken upon them to sell the tithes of the

Church to laymen—to the best bidder, and have infeodated the tithes all over Italy to the secular princes, insomuch that it is reported there is not an inch of tithe now paid to the Church in all Italy ; all is sold to the laity, or appropriated to the monks ; and the like, though not in so great a degree, is done in France, Spain and other Popish countries.

SECTION XI.

Tithes dedicated by particular Vows in England.

England has added the sacred sanction of vows to that general obligation under which she was bound with all the rest of the world.

Tithes have been established by all the authority, both ecclesiastical and civil, that this nation could afford, and dedicated to God by express vows of kings and parliaments, with the most solemn imprecations and curses upon themselves and their posterities who should retract or take back any part of the tithes so dedicated. This is well known, many Acts of Parliament confirming it.

[*This section of the Essay gives a complete and detailed proof of this assertion.*]

If a man cannot annul or make void his own vow, without a manifest mocking of God, how can he recall or disannul the vow of another?

Shall we think that too much which God has reserved as holy unto Himself, and for which He had promised to bless us in all that we set our hands unto? Is not He able to make us amends and increase our store an hundred-fold? Is not He able to punish our distrust of Him, and take away our nine parts who grudge to give Him the tenth? Is not this a snare of the devil to throw us out of God's favor and make us forfeit His protection? Is it not a snare to the man who devoureth that which is holy, and after vows, to make inquiry? (Prov. xx: 25.) If it is not lawful to make inquiry, to grudge, or snip from what I have vowed, though it be of things which I was not obliged to vow or to give away, how much more unlawful is it to make inquiry after I have vowed that which was God's due before I vowed, and which I was obliged to pay, though I had not vowed it at all?

If the dissembling of Ananias and Sapphira was construed a lying, not to men, but to the Holy Ghost; how is it not a lying both to men and to the Holy Ghost (Acts v: 4) to defeat the grants of our forefathers, to disannul their vows, and rob God of what they had vowed to Him, and which was His due before, and is still due from us, though neither they nor we had ever

vowed them? There is a greater complication of daring and provoking sins in this matter than perhaps is to be found in any other instance now in practice among us, and which we ought not to forget in the list of those sins, for which God is now visibly punishing of these nations. We have refused Him his tenth, and He has taken our nine parts from us, and scarcely left a tenth in the nation of what but a few years ago we did possess.

[*This was written of England in A.D. 1700.*]

Sir Henry Spelman, in his *History of Sacrilege*, and his son, Clem. Spelman, in his preface to his father's book, *De non Temerand, Eccl.*, has given many and remarkable instances of the ruin and destruction of those families who shared most of the church lands and tithes in the beginning of our Reformation, and before from William the Conqueror; especially it was taken notice of that the heirs of such families were taken off untimely, or that they had no heirs, and their estates and honors went into other families. This was chiefly remarkable in Henry VIII himself, all of whose children died childless, and left his crown to another family and nation. And whereas the addition of the church lands and treasure, which were annexed to the crown, were thought so inexhaustible that Henry VIII promised to his Parliament that if they would settle them upon

the crown, he would free the nation forever from taxes and subsidies; would maintain forty earls, sixty barons, three hundred knights and forty thousand soldiers, and that they should always be so maintained upon the expense of the crown (*How's Preface to Stow's Annals; Coke's Jurisdiction of Courts*, f. 44). Yet when these church-lands, and tithes impropriated, were accordingly granted to the crown, together with the plunder of all the church-plate and jewels offered at their shrines, which were inestimable, all that the king had promised in lieu of them was forgot, and the nation never paid such heavy taxes as since that time. Instead of being eased from taxes as they expected and was promised, from that day taxes seemed to be entailed upon them and ever to increase. They have already (as above observed) brought us to a tenth, who have seized upon the tenth of God. Henry VIII himself, who thought never to be poor, lived to see that incredible mass of wealth, which he had robbed from the Churches, all melt away like ice before the sun, and his own vast treasure with it, insomuch that he was at last reduced to coin base money.

Many are too rash in determining the judgments of God to be sent for this or that. And the excess of this, especially of late times, has run others to the contrary extreme of irreligion, to think God wholly unconcerned

in the affairs of the world, and that no notice at all is to be taken of any events, which they suppose to happen casually, and to have no relation to either the good or evil that we do. This is to deny all providence in God, which is Atheism; for it destroys the very notion of a God, which cannot be without His providence supposed, and an universal influence and inspection over all things.

And though it is hard to make an argument, and conclude positively for what particular sin such a judgment was sent—and we often mistake in this and make applications according to humor or interest—yet sometimes judgments are so very legible that we may read our sin in our punishment. And God frequently in Scripture reproves the hardness of their hearts, who shut their eyes against the observation of this signal part of His providence, “Who regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of His hands (Isa. v: 12). “They have belied the Lord, and said, It is not He, neither shall evil come upon us” (Jer. v: 12). It is called a belying of God, to think that the evils which come upon us are not sent from Him; “for,” says He, “I make peace, and create evil; I the Lord do all these things” (Isa. xlv: 7). And, “Shall there be evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?” (Amos iii: 6.) “The wicked blaspheme God, while they do say in

their heart, Tush, thou God carest not for it, He hideth away his face, and He will never see it. Surely thou has seen it, for thou beholdest ungodliness and wrong—that thou mayest take the matter into thine own hand" (Psalm x: 12, 14, 15).

And the Jews are reprehended by our Saviour for "not discerning the signs of the times" (Matt. xvi: 3). It is called a knowing of God, to observe the course of His judgments and His mercies; for how otherwise can we know Him upon earth? "He judged the cause of the poor and needy, then it was well with him: was not this to know me, saith the Lord?" (Jer. xxii: 16).

And the consequence is, that not to take notice of these things, is not to know God; it is to belie Him, to blaspheme Him, as in the texts before quoted, and many more that could be produced to the same purpose.

Now to apply this to our present purpose, I do not pretend to draw an argument from the many instances of God's remarkable judgments upon both their persons and families who had robbed His Church, as if those judgments must of necessity have been inflicted purely and solely for this sin. But if this be a sin, and of so deep a dye, as it must be if it be any sin at all, for it can be no other than sacrilege; and if that be the most open and notorious known sin of these persons, and likewise, that these judgments are observed to follow the lands, houses and tithes

impropriated, though often bought and sold and changing of owners; not in every case, for if God should punish wickedness in all, the world must soon be destroyed; but when we see judgments to follow such a sin, for the most part, and in such repeated and remarkable instances as Sir Henry Spelman gives us in his *History of Sacrilege*, and many more of the same sort, it is far from superstition to take notice of the hand of God in them; and not to do it, is that stupidity and blasphemy before reprehended; it is a hardening ourselves against all the methods of Divine Providence—a denial of it—and living without God in the world.

[Here follow instances from English History and from Holy Writ.]

A view of the present position of Tithes in England is added in Appendix.]

SECTION XII.

The Benefit of Paying our Tithe.

Our services add nothing to God, therefore it is our good which He seeks in all His institutions of religion. It is our good, our greatest good,

that our whole trust should be in the Lord, always and upon all occasions ; because He cannot fail us, and everything else will, and, therefore, we must be miserable if we place our trust in anything else than God, and our greatest happiness must consist in a full and absolute dependence upon Him. Now this trust and dependence is produced more by our deeds than our words ; more by practicing of it than by speaking of it and praising it ; and the payment of our tithe is a practice of it, a trusting in God that He will not only accept it and give us spiritual blessings of it, but even that we shall gain by it, as to this world, and grow the richer for it. For it is His blessing only that giveth increase as to the fruits of the field, so to the labors of our hands, to all our endeavors, in whatever vocation ; and He has promised not only spiritual but even temporal blessings, and increase of our store, if we will trust in Him so far as duly and cheerfully, without grudging or despondency, to pay our tithes to Him. “ Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse that there may be meat in mine house, and prove now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it ; and I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground ; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the

field, saith the Lord of Host; and all nations shall call you blessed, for ye shall be a delightful land, saith the Lord of Hosts" (Mal. iii: 10). The same blessing is promised (Prov. iii: 9), "Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." And thus it was understood by the Jews in after generations; as you find it expressed almost in the same words as these of Solomon, "Give the Lord His honor with a good eye, and diminish not the first-fruits of thine hands: in all thy gifts show a cheerful countenance, and dedicate thy tithes with gladness" (Ecclus. xxv: 8, 9, 10, 11). Therefore it is our own advantage that we pay tithe. The Lord bids us prove Him herein, try Him, trust in Him and see how abundant He will be in His blessings to us, and whether He will not return to us tenfold for the tenth we give to Him. But if we dare not trust God so far as to make this small experiment when He provokes us to it, and grudge to give Him the tenth, who gave us all, it is but just with Him to take that from us wherein we trusted, and not to leave us a tenth; but to take the whole from those who durst not trust Him and all His promises, with a tenth.

Whereas, on the other hand, those who do truly and sincerely believe and trust in God and

in what He has promised, will show it in deeds as well as in words; will pay Him His tithe religiously and with a good heart. And when he finds God performing His promise and rewarding his faith in doubling of his stores, this increases his faith and trust in God. It is practice makes perfect, and it confirms our faith as to the future promises of heaven when we find that God does make good His promises to us here. These are inestimable benefits, even the confirming of our faith, without which we shall never come to heaven.

And I will be bold to say, that whoever dare not trust God's promise as to His tithe (supposing him convinced of it), does not really believe it, nor trust to it as to heaven, however he may flatter himself or impose upon others. For he that will not trust God in a little, how will he in a great deal? If not for a penny, how can he for heaven?

Therefore we see how justly covetousness is called idolatry. A covetous man cannot trust in God; nor can he that trusts sincerely in God ever be covetous. It is impossible, for these are direct opposites. This is the reason that God has commanded we should worship Him not only with our minds, or with our tongues, but with our substance. This puts our faith in practice, and practice confirms and enlarges it. And it is the least proportion of our substance which He

has required, that is the tenth. Something that may show our trust and dependence upon Him. Christ commanded the rich young nobleman to sell all, and the first Christians gave all (Acts iv: 34). All at the beginning gave more than a tenth, else were they esteemed worse than the Jews, who gave that proportion, as I have before shown out of Irenæus, etc. Now, then, the payment of our tithe being of itself productive of so great virtue and strength in our minds to teach us and inure us how to trust in God, and having likewise the promise of so great temporal blessings, is not to be looked upon as a tax or imposition upon us, but as a high privilege and a pledge by which God has obliged Himself to provide for us, and to return us ten times as much, even in this world, besides the end of our faith, which is heaven. Hence our tithe is called "the bread of our soul." And God threatens it as a heavy judgment, that we shall not be permitted to pay our tithe to Him. "They shall not offer wine-offerings to the Lord; their bread for their soul shall not come into the house of the Lord." By this they forfeited all the benefits and all the promises which were annexed to the payment of their tithe. How much more then have we forfeited, who, when we are not only permitted but invited to partake of this benefit, turn the deaf ear and refuse to restore what we have sacrilegiously robbed out of the house of God.

SECTION XIII.

Remarkable Judgments for not Paying of our Tithe.

Tithes being proved to be a part of God's worship, and a blessing to attend the payment of them ; the consequence is implied that a curse must be due to the non-payment of them, it being a contempt of God, and a neglect of His worship. As payment of tribute is an acknowledgment of his being king to whom we think it due, and the denial of tribute is a denial of his being king. So tithe being the tribute which God hath reserved to Himself, to deny that to Him is denying Him to be our God. And though we acknowledge Him with our mouths, yet that will no more be accepted than an earthly king would think him to be a good subject, who only called him king, and gave him the knee or the hat, but yet denied him his tribute and more substantial honor.

See how God punished this neglect of tithe among the Jews. We find this to have borne a great part in the most remarkable judgments that befell them. 1. The Captivity of the ten tribes was in the reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah. And we find by the Reformation which Hezekiah made after that, as well in Israel as

Judah (2 Chron. xxxi), that the payment of their tithes had been greatly neglected, the restoring of the tithe being a main branch of that Reformation. And therefore there is no doubt but that the neglect of paying their tithe had a main weight, as in the excision of the ten tribes, so in the captivity of Judah which soon after followed.

This farther appears in the Reformation of Nehemiah, after the Captivity, wherein they promised amendment of those things which they had formerly neglected, and for which neglect Captivity was sent upon them. They particularly remember the neglect of the Sabbatical year, and the year of release (before mentioned), and promise the future observance of them (Neh. x: 31). And after, to the end of that chapter, there is large mention and renewed promises as to the due and exact payment of their tithes; which makes it plain that as the Sabbatical year and the year of release, so the tithes had been neglected; and that for such neglect they had been punished with that long Captivity. And as the land had rest for 70 years together, to fulfil so many Sabbatical years as they had neglected. So were they deprived of the whole profits of the land, who had neglected to pay the Lord His tenth part.

But after their return from the Captivity they fell again into a new neglect of paying their tithe, for which a heavier curse fell upon them

than before. A vile prostitution of their priesthood, and greater corruption in doctrine and manners than ever formerly, as appears in the history of the Maccabees, and afterward to the time of our blessed Saviour when they were totally subjected to the Romans, at whose pleasure their priesthood was changed, made annual and arbitrary, and their whole service rendered precarious. By their doctrines of Corban, and such like, they had made the commands of God of none effect, as our blessed Saviour reprehended them: "Their Scribes and Pharisees were hypocrites, blind guides, serpents and a generation of vipers" (Matt. xxiii). Their chief priests and elders took council against Jesus, mistook and murdered their Messiah. This was the heaviest of curses! They entailed the guilt of His blood upon them and their children; which lies upon them to this day, in a dispersion to the four winds, of now near 1700 years' standing; a much greater judgment (if they would reflect upon it) than their seventy years' captivity in Babylon, for their former idolatries and prevarications.

But, as to our present subject, was there anything remarkable as to the non-payment of their tithes, before our Saviour's coming, that might be reckoned to have its share in that hardness of heart which proved their destruction? Yes. Godwyn shows from the Jewish authors (in his

Moses and Aaron, l. 6, c. 3, p. 253) that there had been a great neglect among them in the payment of their tithe ; and this increased more and more upon them, insomuch that, as they tell us, for about 130 years before our Saviour's incarnation, this corruption so prevailed that the people in a manner neglected all tithe. But we have a higher authority than even these Jewish authors against themselves, that is, the last of their prophets after the Captivity, who charges this of the non-payment of their tithe, as the great curse which lay upon them ; and therefore must have a principal weight in the fore-named dreadful judgments which fell upon them. Hear his own words, "Will a man rob God? yet ye have robbed me ; but ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? in tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse ; for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation " (Mal. iii : 8, 9).

Let us now descend to the times of Christianity. It has been told before, of the great devotion of the primitive Christians, in giving not only the tenth, but all of them much more, many even all that they had to the service of God ; but this wore away, and they began to grudge the very tenth. Soon after which, in the beginning of the fifth century, there came a dreadful revolution. The Goths and Vandals were let loose, like an impetuous torrent, which overran many nations, and ruined many Chris-

tian Churches that never found an after settlement. Among the rest, the Vandals sacked Hippo in Africa, A.D. 429, immediately after the death of St. Augustine, who was bishop of that city, he, as it were, standing in the gap, and keeping off the vengeance from them while he lived. And in his admonitions to them he laid a particular stress upon their neglect of the payment of their tithe, as a main cause of the miseries which had overtaken them; especially of their poverty, occasioned by the heavy taxes which were extorted from them, to carry on that war in which they were engaged. And he observes to them that God, by this, was exacting double from them for those tithes which they had neglected to pay to Him. "Our forefathers abounded in plenty, because they gave to God and Cæsar their due; that is, tithes to God and tribute to their king; but now, because our devotion toward God is ceased the imposition of taxes is increased. We would not share with God in giving Him the tenth; and now behold the whole is taken from us. The exchequer has swallowed that which we refused to give to Christ."

What shall I say more? We have the promise of God, who cannot lie, that if we will show our trust and dependence upon Him, so far as to give Him a tenth; if we will thereby acknowledged Him to be our God, and that by His

blessing we are made rich, He will return it to us an hundred-fold, till there shall not be room enough to receive it. Again, if we will not trust to Him, but to our own net, that He will empty it, and show Himself to be our God, by manifold judgments, till He overcome us; and make us see and confess that it is He who hath done all these things unto us, and that there is not an evil in the city which He has not sent upon us.

We have seen the faith of Jews and heathens to exceed ours! It was a proverb among the Jews, *Pay tithes and be rich*. So much they acknowledged all that they had to come from God. And the heathens made the same observation, that they who paid most to God did receive most from Him. They saw God's judgments upon them for not giving Him His tenth. They repented and restored the tithe and were delivered. We will not trust God, and provoke Him to convince us by all His judgments! Which God avert, by opening our eyes and enlarging of our hearts, that with a sincere repentance for all our other sins, we may likewise restore His tithe and learn to trust in Him, that He may yet repent for all the evil He has brought upon us, and with which He still threatens us, and may leave a blessing behind Him, even a meat offering and a drink offering unto the Lord our God, that there may be meat in His house and thereby plenty in ours.

SECTION XIV.

Of what things Tithes are to be paid.

Of all things that God gives us. Of all things wherein we expect the blessing of God. For all come under the same reason of paying tithe as an acknowledgment and tribute to God for the nine parts which He has given to us, and to show our dependence and trust in Him for all that we shall receive. "All the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's, it is holy unto the Lord" (Lev. xxvii: 30). "Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed that the field bringeth forth year by year" (Deut. xiv: 22). "The first-fruits of corn, wine, and oil, and honey, and of all the increase of the field, and the tithe of all things. The tithe of oxen and sheep, and the tithe of holy things, which were consecrated unto the Lord their God" (2 Chron. xxxi: 5, 6). "Of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee" (Gen. xxviii: 22). "Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase. So shall thy barns be filled with plenty," etc. (Prov. iii: 9). This is the reward God has promised to it (if we dare trust Him). And wherein soever we expect God so to bless us, of

all those things we must pay Him the tenth; else have we no title to this promise. And this was the notion of the Jews. "I give tithes of all that I possess," said the Pharisee (Luke xviii: 12). And our Saviour determines (Matt. xxiii: 23) that we ought to pay tithes even of mint, anise, and cummin, *i.e.*, of the smallest things.

This was the sense of all the Fathers in the primitive ages of the Church. They excepted nothing from tithe, of which I have given some instances, and many more are to be produced.

It is shown before that this was the universal notion of the heathens in all nations, that tithe was to be paid of all things, of all merchandise and trading, of all manual labor, and of all spoils taken in war, as well as of all estates personal and real—of everything that God gives.

This was the concurrent notion of heathens, Jews and Christians, till Popery, of late, has corrupted it, from whom we have licked it up.

SECTION XV.

If the payment of our Tithe to the Poor, or other charitable uses, be a due payment of our Tithe.

Ans. No. It is shown (Sect. IV) that some part of our substance is due to God as an act of

worship. And it is proved afterward that that proportion is a tenth at least. Therefore it must be paid as an act of worship, which is different from an act of charity. We must give to the poor out of our own nine parts. And this was the current doctrine and practice, as of the Jews under the Law, so of the Christians before that invasion (spoke to above) of the Pope and his emissaries upon this inheritance of God, to which God's title had not been disputed, before that time, since the beginning of the world, no not by the heathen.

SECTION XVI.

When Tithes are to be paid.

Ans. God is to be first served. And besides that, the whole being God's, the nine parts are not released to us but by offering the tenth to God. This has been a received notion even among the Gentiles, as well as Jews and Christians, insomuch that it grew into a proverb among the Greeks, *ἀλλοτρίαν ἐσθίειν*, to eat of things that had not been sacrificed, *i.e.*, of which some part had not first been sacrificed or offered to God, *viz.*, that part which they thought due to

the gods, which I have above shown to be the tenth. And this saying, ἀθότα ἐσθίειν, was used to express the most wicked profligate who had no sense of his duty to God or man, such was he thought, who durst be so profane and irreverent to God as to eat or make use of any thing which had not been hallowed by offering first the tenth of it to God. And, as among the Greeks, so Pliny tells (*Nat. Hist.*, l. 18, c. 2, p. 367) that the Romans never tasted of their fruits or wines till the priests had first taken the first-fruits, or tithe, out of them. So the Arabian law.

And this was correspondent to the law of God Himself, who commanded, Lev. xxiii: 14, "Ye shall eat neither bread nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the self same day that ye have brought an offering unto your God. It shall be a statute for ever." And Numb. xviii: 30, "When ye have heaved the best thereof from it, then (and not before) it shall be counted as the increase of the threshing-floor and of the wine-press;" *i.e.*, to be eaten and made use of. Again (verse 32), "And ye shall bear no sin by reason of it, when ye have heaved from it the best of it;" *i.e.*, that it would be a sin to eat of it without first offering to God His due. That is the tenth, as it is expressed, verse 26. Our entering upon any part, before we have offered to God His tenth part, is a polluting of the whole as to us. For it is sanctified to us by our

offering the tenth to God, till when, the whole is hallowed to God, and it is sacrilege to invade it. Nor is any of it released to our use till God's part be first taken from it.

And you see how strictly this was enjoined by God, and how universally; that as the people were not so much as to taste of any of the fruits of the earth, no not the green ears, till they had offered to the Lord His part out of it, by giving it unto the Levites; so neither were the Levites to taste of any of the people's tithe till they had first offered the tenth of their tenth to God, by giving of it to the high-priest, and that under pain of death, and of rendering the whole polluted to them. He that steals any of his goods to his own use before he has given to God His tenth, steals it and all the rest of God's blessing, and tries if he can grow rich whether God will or not; which, if God permit, it is for his greater judgment, and God can exact it from him or his posterity, upon whom we entail God's curse when we deprive God of His due.

SECTION XVII.

Of what part of our goods the Tithe is to be paid.

Of the very best, no doubt, for we offer it to God. And in this we express the reverence due to the Divine Majesty; and to offer anything to Him that is not the best we have, argues a slight and contempt of Him, and preferring ourselves or something else before Him. Therefore, though we give the full proportion of a tenth, yet if we give it not of the very best, we fail as to the quality of our gift, though not as to the quantity; we forfeit the blessing upon the whole, and instead of that we bring a curse upon us, as seeking to deceive or blind the eyes of God as if He took no notice or did not regard it, which is a greater contempt of God than if we did not offer to Him at all. "But cursed be the deceiver, who hath in his flock a male, and voweth and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing. For I am a great King, saith the Lord of Hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen" (Mal. i: 14). But I need not insist upon this. The commands are numerous and cannot escape the observation of any, that whatever was offered to the Lord was to be without blemish (Deut. xvii: 1). And the texts before quoted (Numb. xviii: 30 and 32) do among many

others plainly express it. "When ye have heaved the best thereof from it, then it shall be counted as the increase of the threshing-floor," etc. "And ye shall bear no sin by reason of it, when ye have heaved from it the best of it;" *i.e.*, if you do not heave the best it will be a sin, and you shall bear it.

SECTION XVIII.

Who they are that ought to pay Tithe.

Ans. All that worship God, for tithe is a part of His worship. Secondly. All that expect His blessing upon the remaining nine parts, and upon their future labors and endeavors.

Object.—Though the rich may bear this, yet it seems very hard upon the poor. *Ans.* It is no harder to the poor than to the rich, because they pay proportionably, and upon the rich other payments are laid, so equal is this tax of God's imposing! After the tithe of worship, the Jews were obliged to pay another tithe of charity to the poor, which was called the poor man's tithe. And this latter sort of tithe no man was obliged to pay to any who was not poorer than himself, by which rule the very poorest sort are excused

from this tithe. But none are excused from the tithe of worship, more than from their prayers or any other part of God's worship. None must appear before the Lord empty. There is no exception from this rule. If it be said, what does such a modicum signify which a very poor man can give? *Ans.* It is accepted by God as much or more, if given with a better heart, than the great offerings of the rich. The poor widow's two mites were reckoned more than all that the rich had offered of their abundance (Luke xxi: 3).

Observe that those priests to whom this widow gave her two mites were rich and covetous beside; they "devoured widows' houses" (Luke xx: 47); they were those to whom our blessed Saviour said, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell! (Matt. xxiii: 33); yet He made it no objection against this religious widow, that she should throw in her mite to swell the wealth of those wicked men, who were much more capable to have relieved her necessities, than she was to add to their store. For He knew, and has instructed us, that her offering was to God and not to the priests; though the priests did receive it, and it was put into their treasury; yet Christ calls those gifts which were cast into it "the offerings of God" (Luke xxi: 1-4).

It has been before observed how the primitive Christians gave, many of them all that they had,

as this widow had done ; but none less than a tenth, for that they thought themselves bound to give more than the Jews, because, as Irenæus said, they had a better hope.

How far short of the Jewish performance, and how much shorter of the primitive Christian devotion, do we come, who will not pay the one-tenth, even of worship, which is indispensably due to God Himself, which He has reserved by a universal decree ever since Adam? How will the heathen rise up in the judgment and condemn us who have, through all ages and nations, made conscience of paying the tithe of God, though they worshiped God in this, as in other parts of their worship, after an unlawful and idolatrous manner? How will this condemn us, who stand out against the light and universal tradition which they had, against the positive commands of the Law and the Gospel, and against the current sense of the primitive and universal Church of Christ, and oppose to all these the modern corruptions of the Church of Rome, which have made tithes eleemosynary and alienable? And we have alienated them in a much more scandalous manner, and upon less pretence, than Rome has done. She gave them from the secular to the regular clergy; we, from all clergy to the laity. This was a piece of Popery whereby a penny was to be got, therefore we reformed it backwards into our own pockets! Our Jehu

destroyed Baal, indeed, out of the land, but he departed not from the sin of the golden calves (2 Kings x: 28, 29).

SECTION XIX.

If Tithes may be Commuted or Redeemed?

Tithes are a part of God's worship, instituted by Himself, and therefore cannot be altered or changed but by Himself.

It is expressly commanded by God (Levit. xxvii: 28), "No devoted thing, that a man shall devote unto the Lord, of all that he hath, both of man and beast, and of the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed—every devoted thing is most holy unto the Lord."

But the Pope and a Popish Parliament first have dispensed with this, out of the plenitude of their power! And their pardon is all that either of their impropiators will have to plead at the day of judgment.

Those who have no other consideration of tithe but as maintenance for the clergy, say if they provide for them another way, where is the harm?

But the folly of God is wiser than men. He

knew well what would be the consequence of having the clergy depend upon any for their subsistence ; that the temptation was too strong for human nature in our fallen condition ; that time-servers and men-pleasers would, by this, creep into the Church, and sow pillows under the arms of those who fed them. That by this they must fall into contempt and religion with them, as the effect has sadly shown.

Therefore God would not give the Levites temporal possessions among their brethren, for these would be liable to their municipal laws like the rest, and they might be voted out and in, be chopped and changed, according to the caprice of those who would not abide their doctrine. But He settled upon them His own inheritance, as he calls it (Deut. xviii : 1), which none others might touch, without sacrilege, and throwing off their homage and allegiance to God Himself, *i.e.*, rejecting Him from being their King and their God (which nowadays is the slenderest sort of security). That as the priesthood had its original and institution, so it should have its revenue, and maintenance, and dependence from God alone.

And as they that served God at the altar were partakers with the altar, *i.e.*, with the dues of God, which were offered upon the altar, " even so hath the Lord ordained, that they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel," *i.e.*, of those

things which are due to God under the Gospel (as tithes and free-will offerings still are); and should be as free and independent on man in their office as the priests were under the Law.

SECTION XX.

To whom Tithes are to be paid.

The tithe of charity, or the poor man's tithe, being alms, we may dispose of them to such objects of charity as we think best; and these are called sacrifices, in a large sense, under the Gospel as well as under the Law. See Heb. xiii: 16; Phil. iv: 18.

But there is a preference given (Gal. vi: 10) to that charity which is extended to the household of faith, that is, to our fellow-Christians rather than others. Christ reckons it as done to Himself (Matt. xxv: 40).

As to the tithe of worship, as that is determined to a tenth, at least so must it be paid only to the priests of the Lord. Because it is part of God's worship, it is one of the offerings of the Lord.

But how shall they do who live in foreign, infidel, or heretical countries, where they can have no priests, that is, none whom they own?

Let them, if they can, imitate the zeal of Tobias, who, being of the ten idolatrous and schismatical tribes that had cast off the priesthood of Levi, carried his tithes to Jerusalem, and offered them there by the hands of the priests, the sons of Aaron, as you find, Tob. i: 6.

But if this cannot be done, for the distance of the place or other insuperable difficulties, then they ought to send their tithes to such priests whom they think to be true priests of God, and consequently by whose hands they believe God will accept of them.

There is no place too far for sending. We traffic for Mammon to all parts of the world.

It was common with the Gentiles to send their tithe.

Tithes (*τελεφερον*) were yearly sent to Delos, where Apollo was born, to be offered to him there.

The Carthaginians used to send their tithe to Tyre (*Justin. Hist.*, l. 18, p. 186), (whence they had come) by one clothed in priestly purple robes, to be offered to Hercules.

And if we cannot take so much pains, we have less zeal than they, and less trust in our God, less faith in His promises and fear of His threatenings than they toward their idols, and our reward will be accordingly.

SECTION XXI.

In what manner Tithes ought to be offered.

The offering of our tithe to God, being an act of worship, ought, no doubt, to be performed with prayers and adoration of God. And God Himself did prescribe a form for it (Deut. xxvi).

[Leslie proposed and prepared a Form which he annexed to his Essay.]

This acknowledgment and devotion to God was commanded to the Jews, and observed by the heathen from the dictates even of natural religion.

And what is it that can exempt Christians from paying this? From rendering unto God the honor and tribute due unto His name? Sure they ought rather to exceed than come short of Jews and heathens in this!

It were much to be desired that a public office were appointed for this, and this made part of our solemn devotion; but till that be done I hope it will not be taken amiss by our superiors to exhort both our priests to receive and the laity to pay this their bounden duty to God, and at His altar to offer up His tithes.

We are to bring our tithes and offerings unto

the Lord, and not leave Him or His priests to draw them or choose.

The priests were no more to draw the tithes of the people thither than their other sacrifices.

SECTION XXII.

How Priests are to pay their Tithes ?

Aus. To the bishop, as the Levites to the high-priest. They are to pay the tenth of their tenth. And the Levites' tithe, which they paid to the high-priest, was as much an offering and sacrifice to the Lord as the tithe which the people paid to the Levites, and under the same limitations. They are called an heave-offering, and holy unto the Lord. The Levites were not to taste of their tenths till they had first offered the tithe of them to the high-priest and of the very best of them; as you may see, Numb. xviii, from verse 26.

Tithes argued the superiority of those to whom they were paid (Heb. vii : 4, 9, 10). Whence the Apostle inferred the superiority, as of Melchisedec above Abram, so of the priesthood of Melchisedec, and in that of the Christian priesthood above the Levitical.

And as the Levites tithing of the people, or putting them under that tribute, argued the superiority of the Levites above the people, so the high-priest's tithing of the Levites showed the superiority of his order above that of the other Levites.

And this is as necessary to preserve the superiority of episcopacy above the order of presbyters in the Christian Church.

The reasons hold the same, and the Levitical priesthood was an exact type of the Christian. Bishop, presbyter and deacon being the same in the Church that Aaron, his sons, the priests and the Levites were in the temple; as St. Jerome observes, *Ep. ad. Evagr.*

If it be asked to whom the Bishop should pay his tithe?

Ans. He having no superior, as Aaron had none, I conceive that he is not under the tithe of worship. For it must end somewhere.

But then as the heaven returns the tribute of those exhalations which it draws from the earth in dew and fruitful showers, so the bishop, being the most immediate representative of Christ, ought to distribute his tenths and more of charity, and to water his flock with his beneficence.

Thus returning to the poor with increase their tithes, and dispensing the temporal as well as spiritual blessings of God to them.

That the revenues of the Church (whatever other abuses were in the administration of them) were applied more to this end than since they came into temporal hands, will be shown in the next section.

[*This section shows God's way of providing for the Episcopal Fund in every Diocese.*]

SECTION XXIII.

The Remedy.

Having thus far considered the Divine obligation of tithes and the breaches of it that have been in this nation, we ought not to leave the subject till we can propose a remedy, if any such can be found.

For the obligation of conscience; that lies upon every man concerned to restore what has been robbed from God; in order to procure His blessing, instead of that curse which is entailed upon the sacrilegious possession of the spoils of His Church, into whatever hands they come.

Money is the blood of the kingdom, and the circulation of it diffuses life and vigor to every part. Now, if according to what has been said

in this essay, there were a perpetual circulation of the tenths of the kingdom from the people to the priests, from the priests to the bishops, and back again from the bishops to the poor, I submit it to consideration whether this would not prove a greater advantage to the nation than any that State projectors have yet found out? God requires nothing but for our good, and His folly is wiser than men.

Let me, lastly, obviate a prejudice I foresee may be taken against my proposal, for prejudices must be answered as well as arguments, and often sway men more.

It may be thought by some who have no goodwill to the Church or religion that this would make the clergy too great and rich. Against that I offer the following considerations:

That the number of our clergy is too few. They are not able to attend such vast charges as they ought, especially in London and other great towns. Then our bishoprics are too large. And the bishop's inspection would be much more effectual if he had no more priests under him than he could be personally acquainted with, both as to their learning and conversation.

These defects cannot, as things now stand, be amended; but if the Church were restored to her right, then might there be twenty times as many clergy as we have, and their cures brought within a manageable compass, which would keep them

from the danger of being overgrown with wealth, and there would not be danger of weakening the strength or wealth of the nation, as in Spain, by so many idle monks as live upon the labors of others and contribute nothing to the support of the government. That objection cannot lie against secular clergy and where there are none other. None that are locked up from the world and must be maintained only to think. None but who are laborers in the harvest, and, therefore, worthy of their hire; and whose hire goes not into a bed of sand, like what is given to the regulars and never returns; but it circulates like any other money of the nation and does as much good.

Those who converse in the world and mind their cures are in the road, certainly, of doing most good. These are therefore called the secular clergy, because they live in the world and use human conversation. But those who run themselves into holes as if, forsooth, their sanctity could not bear the common air, and put themselves under rules and models of their own devising, do therefore give themselves the name of regulars, and would be angels before their time. But men are born into the world to serve their generation; and they who make too much haste out of it, either by taking away their own lives (as some have done out of conscience), or by making them useless to the world in retire-

ment, are guilty of the same sin in different degrees.

The first Christian monks were made so, not of choice, but necessity; they fled, in the heat of persecution, to wildernesses and solitary places, where, by custom, they contracted a liking of the lonely, that is, the monastic life, which, as it is natural, they praised for the pleasure of its safety and freedom of thought. For this they could not find anywhere else, when nothing but racks and gibbets were to be seen for Christians outside of the confines of their retirement.

And others, when this necessity was over, out of a superstitious weakness would imitate this manner of living, and set it up for a constant and the most perfect rule of life, which, should all men imitate, the world must perish in a moment. Men may, with as much reason, run themselves into jails, in imitation of the Christian imprisonments, as into woods and privacies, to act their flights and abscondings. It looks very like what we call children's play. But it comes to too sad earnest when it is set up for a principle.

To prohibit any order or degree of men, without exception, from marriage is a doctrine of devils.

The fury of the first persecutions, from a temporary and prudent forbearance of marriage, run many into an excess in praise of celibacy, which

was counted a curse and a reproach among the most pious of former ages; but the enjoining of it, as it is contrary to the frame of the world, so to the commands of God; and placing a greater sanctity in it than in the state of marriage is of pernicious consequence, as is seen among those where this principle is set up.

But this is a digression, though not wholly foreign to our business, for such a number of priests as England would require, prohibited from marriage, would be an unsupportable detriment to the community and public good. Therefore, though these reasons might have been urged for dissolving the regulars in the beginning of the Reformation, yet they can have no place against the restoring of our secular clergy to what these regulars, as well as others, had robbed from them.

As to the point of marriage we need say no more of it, for it is not grudged to our clergy by any but the Romanists. But there are many prejudiced against their being admitted to any share in the civil administration. They pretend that it is, at least, an impediment to the office of their calling, which they would have wholly abstracted from the world, and to respect only heavenly things, and that they should be useless in all other respects.

This, as I said, is a spice of the monkish superstition, for I would pray these men to

consider, whether the practice be not as necessary to a clergyman as the preaching of good doctrine? And wherein can he show his practice more, or so beneficially, as in assisting to the making of good laws, and preventing of wickedness from being established by law?

It is nowise unfit for clergymen to concern themselves in civil affairs, else it would be as unlawful for them to be arbitrators as judges. For it takes up their time, and engages them in secular thoughts different from their studies. Yet no man makes it an objection, but thinks it very becoming the office of a clergyman to be a peace-maker, and reconcile differences amongst his flock or neighborhood, which is impossible for him to do without understanding something of worldly business.

It would be no inconvenience for the public if there were provisions for several thousands of our children (more than there are) among the clergy. And this, being joined with other great advantages before mentioned, which would accrue to the whole nation, by restoring the ancient patrimony of the Church, ought to be no small encouragement toward it.

CONCLUSION.

If it be a truth that we ought to honor the Lord with our substance ; if that be part of His worship, of the honor due unto His name ; if the determinate quantum of a tenth part has been the received notion and practice of the whole earth ever since the beginning, as far as we have any account of times ; if God has promised great blessings, as well temporal as eternal, to our performance of this part of religious worship, the due payment of our tithe to Him, and threatened the neglect thereof with severe judgments, even to curse whole nations, accounting it as a robbing of Himself, and if we have seen this made good amongst the Jews and Christians, and visited many years after it was committed in following generations, to show that He forgets not this sin, though He may bear long with it—then there must be no compounding or jesting with God.

If, when we say to God, Hallowed be Thy name, we must mean all that is hallowed to His name, as well things as words, that all such be paid to Him, then whenever we repeat the Lord's Prayer we do again hallow all our dedicated

things to God. It is a fresh vow, at least an acknowledgment and recognition of all our former vows, and not only of our own, but of what has been vowed and dedicated by others, especially if we are their successors, for then the obligation descends upon us and we are answerable for the performance.

All I have to add is, that wherein soever we find we have done amiss, we should not defer to return and amend, and put not off from day to day. Abraham rose early to sacrifice his only son whom he loved. There must be a zeal to execute the commands of God, even when most adverse to flesh and blood, to show the preference we give to God above all other things whatsoever. Without this we shall never be able to overcome the strong temptations of the world. And when they cannot persuade us they will retard and hinder us, and make us go heavily about our work; and then they seldom fail to stop us altogether, and finally to disappoint us. For the longer we delay, after we are convinced, we are every day less apt to disengage ourselves from the world; our trust in God grows weaker when we dare not venture upon it, and, by the same degrees, our trust in the world grows stronger. And the longer it continues so we grow weaker and weaker, and our faith dwindles into less than a grain of mustard-seed. Whereas if we would put on a noble and Christian

courage and but try the experiment, then if we found it answer beyond our expectations, it would increase our faith, and we should rise from strength to strength, and find comforts beyond expression; not only that peace of mind which the world cannot give, but it would be the **surest means to attain even the riches of this world**; to prevail with God to bless and increase our store as He has promised, and bid us prove Him herewith, if He will not perform it (Mal. iii: 10).

And if an example will be any encouragement, he that writes this does assure the reader that he knows, now at this present, where tithes are and have been for some time punctually paid, according to the rules before set down. And the effects have been wonderful, more than an hundred-fold, and in manner extremely remarkable and surprising.

GLORY BE TO GOD.

17th July, 1699.

APPENDIX.

PRESENT POSITION OF TITHES IN ENGLAND.

The popular apprehension of "Tithes" is so far associated with the English system of taxing land for the Church, that a few words of explanation may prove to be of value.

In England, before the Conquest, all lands, except those owned by the Church, were required to pay annually for Church purposes, one-tenth of the supposed or actual producing value.

From time to time some of this land was sold subject to such tax; in some cases a tenth of its area was retained in fee for the Church, the remaining nine-tenths only, passing to the purchaser tithe-free.

During the present century, legal authority was given for commutating the tithe on some of the lands by payment to a Commission of a certain sum, the interest of which should represent the tithe-tax, and be applied to Church purposes.

At various times, notably under Henry VIII, great quantities of Church lands were stolen from

the Church, and given to favorites or retained by the Crown. When the lands thus stolen belonged to religious houses and were worked by themselves, the tithe-charge of course did not appear. Therefore after its alienation, this land became tithe-free. When the lands were not so worked but were held upon rent and tithe-charge, the laity or the Crown acquired both by the robbery.

Wherever the tithe on land exists at the present day, whether payable to layman, to the Crown or to the Church, it is in the nature of "ground-rent." The payer of it acquired his land subject to the tithe, as if it were a mortgage which could not be redeemed, but on which the interest must always be paid.

Attempts are constantly made by land-owners disaffected to the Church to avoid payment of tithes to the Church, in the mistaken notion that they thereby assist in supporting it against their will; whereas such action is simply a repudiation of part of the purchase-money or rental value of the land which they have bought, leased or otherwise acquired; for if there had been no tithe-charge when originally acquired, the price would have been one-tenth greater than it was.

It is as if a piece of land worth \$1,000 were sold for \$900, subject to the perpetual payment of the interest on \$100. The fact that this interest goes to the Church no more suggests the

support of the Church by persons disaffected to it, than would a similar payment to an individual of whom they bought land, involve an approval of his conduct or religious convictions.

The "*Tithe-charge*," then, survives as a monument of the universal prevalence in England for centuries, and from its early history, of a sense of the obligation to pay TO GOD THE TENTH OF THE PRODUCE OF HIS LANDS as a return for the use of them, as an acknowledgment of His ownership, not only of the land but of the services of His people, and as a tribute to His power and glory.

J. V. M.

THE EDITOR TO EVERY CHRISTIAN READER.

Until sacrilege is no longer a sin; until covetousness has no power, and the human heart ceases to be deceitful, the Divine right of tithes will be religiously regarded by those who tremble at God's word (Isa. lxvi : 2).

The work which Christ has left to His Church demands a constant supply of means, for which a certain portion of our substance must be constantly set aside. This portion should not be fractional or incomplete, but at least a unit, which is one in ten.

He to whom "tithe" is due is the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth. In paying it to our Lord Jesus we acknowledge that He is Lord of all. He requires that we forsake all for Him. Have we done this? Can it be proved that we hold all we have as His, if we separate not, the least complete number for His constant and absolute service? How long shall we neglect His work, waiting and seeking for means to do it?

This want of preparation (the sin of the foolish

virgins) leads us to question and to evade many occasions of usefulness; but when prepared for duty, its performance is prompt and pleasant. If the Lord's storehouse is liable to be empty, His laborers will be depressed. It is when we acknowledge Him in all our ways that His blessing is promised. The tithe is such an acknowledgment, and by laying it aside for Him it becomes a constant supply for our constant duty.

Can we be aggressive or escape shame, while unable to meet present obligations? It is as necessary as it is profitable, to lay aside the tithe of our increase for God. We purloin from His treasury when we do not honor Him thus with our substance. Although He records His acceptance of the tithe and His blessing upon tithers, missions and all Christian charities are suffering, because we prefer human devices to the way of the Lord.

We shall soon give an account of our stewardships, and God requireth that which is past. It is sin in the camp which hinders the conquest of the world for Christ. Let us, therefore, heed the teachings of reason and Scripture, lest withholding our tithe we commit sacrilege, and lest coming short through covetousness, we add to sacrilege, idolatry.

The true Melchisedec, who liveth and receiveth tithes continually; who blest Abraham and said even to those whom He reprov'd, that they

should have tithed; He, in unchanging wisdom and goodness still calls to those who would truly worship, "prove me now, in bringing all your tithes into the storehouse that there may be meat in my house, if I will not pour you out a blessing."

"Who among you will give ear to this; who will hearken and hear for the time to come."

CHAS. R. BONNELL.

*St. Stephen Church,
Manayunk, Philadelphia.*

256.3E

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Leslie, Charles

The divine right of tithes

An abridgement by C.R. Bonnell

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